



Brookings
HEALTH SYSTEM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brookings Health Encourages Self-Testing for COVID-19

Brookings, S.D. – Jan. 24, 2022 – With the current rise in COVID-19 cases spread by the omicron variant, Brookings Health System encourages community members who have started experiencing mild COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 to use an at-home, self-test for diagnosis.

“We’re at a point in the pandemic where we need our community to wisely use clinic, urgent care and emergency room resources,” said Emergency Department Director Karen Weber. “If you’re not high risk, are experiencing mild symptoms or no symptoms at all, an at-home test can give you accurate results.”

Self-tests are available for purchase at local pharmacies and retailers. In addition, people may order free test kits from the South Dakota Department of Health at doh.sd.gov/COVID/Testing and the U.S. Federal Government at COVIDtests.gov.

COVID-19 self-tests are very reliable at detecting COVID when symptoms are present. If an at-home test is negative when symptoms are present, the cause is most likely another illness such as a cold or influenza.

“If you test positive with a self-test, you do not need to retest elsewhere. Please stay at home, inform your primary care provider and any close contacts, perform self-care and isolate,” says Weber. “Current CDC guidelines state you should isolate for five days after you first experienced symptoms or had a positive viral test. If after day five you have no symptoms or fever, you can leave your house, but please continue to wear a mask and avoid being around high-risk people for another five days.”

Brookings Health encourages community members who are mildly to moderately sick with COVID-19 to follow supportive self-care and at-home treatment. Those measures include:

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- **Get plenty of rest.** Your body needs the energy to fight the illness. Do not take on big activities while staying at home; they can wait. COVID can get worse at the end of its course; it's not unusual for days eight to 10 to be the hardest.
- **Stay hydrated.** Try to drink six to eight glasses of liquids (water, sports drink, juice) per day, especially with a fever. Urine should look closer to lemonade than apple juice. If it is darker, drink more liquids. Avoid caffeinated beverages or alcohol.
- **Take over-the-counter (OTC) medications.** Use acetaminophen/Tylenol or ibuprofen to reduce fever and pain. Keeping the fever down helps prevent dehydration and helps so the body doesn't have to fight as hard. Use cough suppressants, nasal decongestants and chest expectorants as needed.
- **Prone.** Cycle through the prone positions to help with your breathing and keep your lungs open. Change positions every 30 minutes to two hours in this order: 1) lying on your belly; 2) lying on your right side; 3) sitting up; 4) lying on your left side; 5) back to lying on your belly and repeat.
- **Take big, deep breaths.** Taking two to three deep breaths every hour help gets oxygen deep in the lungs, assisting in clearing out mucous and other fluids.
- **Monitor oxygen levels.** If you have an at-home pulse oximeter, monitor your oxygen levels to be sure they are over 90%.
- **Seek care if symptoms worsen.** Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any of the following:
 - Difficulty breathing or increased shortness of breath
 - Persistent chest pain
 - Unable to keep fluids down
 - Unable to reduce fever with OTC medications
 - Increased weakness or falling
 - Inability to stay awake or new confusion
 - Bluish lips or face

"If you're unable to manage your symptoms at home, call your primary care provider. If you experience very severe symptoms, we want to see you in the ER," said Weber. "But please always call before you come to any provider so they can prepare for your visit and protect themselves from getting sick."

More information about COVID-19 can be found online at brookingshealth.org/COVID.

About Brookings Health System

Brookings Health System, located in Brookings, South Dakota, includes a 49-bed hospital, the 79-bed The Neighborhoods at Brookview nursing home, Brookhaven Estates senior living apartments, Yorkshire Eye Clinic & Optical, and medical clinics in Arlington, White and Volga, South Dakota. It is a non-profit, city-owned facility that offers the community a full range of

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inpatient, outpatient, emergency and extended care services. Brookings Hospital provides local access to doctors in Brookings and offers robotic da Vinci surgery and Mako robotic-arm assisted procedures, making it one of the premier rural community hospitals in South Dakota. For more information about the services offered at Brookings Health System, please call (605) 696-9000 or visit us on the Web at brookingshealth.org.

PHOTO: Brookings Health System is encouraging the public to use at-home, COVID-19 self-test kits, like these, when they are experiencing mild symptoms or have been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19. Using self-tests will help ease the demand for clinic, urgent care and ER resources during the omicron variant wave.

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